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NSC BRIEFING

21 September 1957

SOVIET LEADERSHIP

I. Khrushchev's current position may be somewhat uncomfortable; indications [REDACTED] 25X1C are that some resistance to his leadership remains despite big victory in June and apparent strong support in Central Committee.

A. [REDACTED] 25X1C he wants to get rid of Bulganin, Voroshilov, and Suslov but that he can't secure the necessary majority in the presidium. 25X1C

B. [REDACTED]
25X1C [REDACTED] states that Khrushchev is not popular in party circles, where it is doubted that he will be able to keep power for long. 25X1C

C. [REDACTED] "Khrushchev isn't feared nor loved. In the party apparatus he is still regarded with some contempt."

II. [REDACTED] 25X1C Khrushchev has lost face with the public as a result of the June purges.

A. [REDACTED] 25X1C the working people there reacted angrily to the June purge and talked openly about demonstrations. They are said to have booed Khrushchev during his visit to Leningrad for its 250th anniversary celebration.

B. [REDACTED] 25X1C received information that the people in Brest were openly critical of Khrushchev and in favor of Malenkov. He claimed that similar reports had been received from other Soviet cities.

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25X1C

- C. [REDACTED] many Soviet citizens are depressed, cynical and distrustful of the present party leaders.

III. This changing climate may put Khrushchev under pressure to tighten up.

A. One method would be to try to create a new wave of popular indignation against the "opposition."

B. However, drastic action against Malenkov or other members of the "anti-party group" would not appear to be in Khrushchev's best interest.

1. It would knock the props from under Khrushchev's campaign platform of de-Stalinization.
2. Old fashioned punitive measures could also touch off a wave of terror that might be impossible to control.
3. His economic program would undoubtedly be severely jeopardized.

IV. A Stalinist type purge, then, if it materialized, would probably mean that Khrushchev is leading from weakness.

A. He may fear that Malenkov, in particular, may become a rallying point for new opponents in the future. (Recent information tends to confirm Soviet claims that Malenkov has been sent to Kazakhstan to head a hydro-electric station.)

B. Yet if he attacks opposition for complicity in the purges of the thirties, he will not be able to hide his own dirty hands.

C. However, army may be pressuring him to set the record straight on the purge era. A few purged army leaders have been mentioned favorably recently (Tukhachevsky, Bluecher).

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V. These problems may be coming to a head.

A. [REDACTED] ^{25X1C} another Central Committee

plenum may convene soon.

B. Khrushchev is still on vacation, however, but is expected to return to Moscow shortly.

1. Aneurin Bevan, who saw him at Yalta on 17 September, claimed that Khrushchev appeared preoccupied with internal affairs.

C. [REDACTED] ^{25X1C} Bulganin (who reportedly became linked with the opposition) is about to be dropped as Premier and that Mikoyan is considered the most likely candidate to take his place.

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